

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SIG-03 MMO-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 TRSE-00 OMB-01
EB-08 /114 W

-----057330 081008Z /11

R 072345Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9812
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MADRID
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AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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AMEMBASSY SOFIA
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AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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AMEMBASSY OSLO
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USMISSION USBERLIN
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 11631

GENEVA ALSO FOR SALT AND CCD DELS

USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: FR, PINT
SUBJECT: THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY AND "EURO-
COMMUNISM"

1. SUMMARY: THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PART (PCF) IS CURRENTLY GOING THROUGH A PERIOD OF INTERNAL DEBATE AND SELF-CRITICISM AS IT APPRAISES THE RESULTS OF ITS TACTICS DURING THE ELCTION CAMPAIGN AND CONSIDERS OPTIONS FOR FUTURE STRATEGY. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT NOW THE OUTCOME OF THIS DEBATE. NEVERTHELESS, THE PCF'S BEHAVIOR DURING THE RECENT CAMPAIGN WAS A SORRY ONE BY MOST STANDARDS WHICH COULD BE APPLIED TO NON-COMMUNIST WESTERN PARTIES. WHATEVER "EUROCOMMUNISH" MAY MEAN, THE PCF HASN'T BEEN MUCH OF AN ADVERTISEMENT FOR IT. THE OUTLINE TRANSMITTED BELOW MAY BE USEFUL TO OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON OR OVERSEAS IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS
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OF THE PCF AND ITS ROLE IN THE FRENCH ELECTIONS. END
SUMMARY.

2. RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW: THE PCF HAS NURTURED AN IMAGE OF INDEPENDENCE FROM MOSCOW, USING CAREFULLY SELECTED ISSUES OF HIGH DOMESTIC INTEREST SUCH AS HUMAN RIGHTS, AND IT IS PROBABLY TRUE THAT THE PARTY NO LONGER IS UNDER MOSCOW'S OUTRIGHT CONTROL. NEVERTHELESS, THERE REMAIN SIGNS OF SOVIET INFLUENCE. THE PCF SEEKS TO AVOID ANTAGONIZING THE SOVIETS WHENEVER POSSIBLE; ITS FOREIGN POLICY IS CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH SOVIET POLICY; IT RECEIVES SOVIET SUBSIDIES; AND IT IS LAUDATORY OF SOVIET AHCIEVEMENTS. WHATEVER THE PRECISE NATURE OF THE PCF'S RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW, IT REMAINS MANIFESTLY THE MOST ANTITHETICAL TO US INTERESTS OF ALL FRENCH POLITICAL PARTIES.

3. ATTITUDE TOWARD DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS: THE PCF CLAIMS IT WILL ADHERE TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, BUT ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTIONS MARCHAIS POINTEDLY REASSERTED THE PARTY'S COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AS THE MODEL FOR PARTY ORGANIZATION, SAYING ANY OTHER BEHAVIOR

WOULD LEAD TO "SCLEROSIS." MARCHAIS DID SAY DEMOCRATIC
CENTRALISM WAS NOT NECESSARILY THE MODEL FOR SOCIETY
AS A WHOLE, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE PCF WOULD MAINTAIN
ITS DEMOCRATIC CENTRALIST ORGANIZATION EVEN WITHIN A
UNITED LEFT GOVERNMENT. THUS THE DICTATES OF THE
PARTY LEADERSHIP, ARRIVED AT AFTER SECRET DELIBERA-
TIONS, WOULD CONTROL THE BEHAVIOR OF PCF MINISTERS AND
OTHER OFFICIALS, RATHER THAN THE JOINT DECISIONS OF
THE GOVERNMENT. FURTHERMORE, ADHERENCE TO DEMOCRATIC
CENTRALISM FOR THE PARTY'S STRUCTURE MUST AT LEAST
RAISE DOUBTS AS TO THE PARTY'S INTENTIONS FOR THE
ORGANIZATION OF FRANCE.

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4. ECONOMIC CONCEPTS: THE PCF'S POSITIONS ON ECONOMIC ISSUES -- EVEN AS DESCRIBED BY SOCIALIST ECONOMIST MICHEL ROCARD -- "ARE CONVEIVED TOTALLY IN TERMS OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL, WITHOUT REALLY CONSIDERING WHAT IS AN OPEN ECONOMY WITH AUTONOMOUS ENTERPRISES." THE FRENCH COMMUNIST ECONOMIC PROGRAM ADVOCATES RAPID AND RADICAL CHANGES SUCH AS A SHARP REFLATION OF THE ECONOMY, DRASTIC INCOME REDISTRIBUTION, AND VERY EXTENSIVE NATIONALIZATIONS IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR. IF ADOPTED, THESE MEASURES WOULD CLEARLY LEAD TO A MAJOR INCREASE IN GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF THE ECONOMY AND NECESSITATE SUCH A HIGH LEVEL OF PROTECTIONISM AS TO PUT IN QUESTION FRANCE'S CONTINUATION IN THE EEC.

5. POLITICAL STRATEGY: AS REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH THE SPANISH (PCE) AND ITALIAN (PCI) COMMUNIST PARTIES HAVE POINTED OUT (AZCARATE AS REPORTED PARIS 10802 AND NAPOLITANO AS REPORTED ROME 6056) THE PCF REVEALED BY ITS TACTICS DURING THE CAMPAIGN THAT IT HAD DEPARTED FROM WHAT THE TWO MORE MODERATE WESTERN PARTIES CONSIDER TO BE THE "EUROCOMMUNIST" STRATEGY FOR COMING TO POWER. WHILE THE PCE AND THE PCI FAVOR SEEKING A

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BROAD POPULAR CONSENSUS, INCLUDING NOT ONLY THE POOREST WORKING CLASSES BUT ALSO THE MIDDLE CLASSES, THE PCF,

BY REFUSING TO COMPROMISE WITH THE SOCIALISTS AND PROVOKING THE SPLIT IN THE LEFT WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO ITS ELECTORAL FAILURE, SHOWED IT WAS LESS INTERESTED IN BUILDING SUCH A CONSENSUS THAN IN ASSERTING ITS OWN IDENTITY.

6. INABILITY TO WORK WITH OTHER PARTIES: THE PCF-PROVOKED BREAK IN THE LEFT SHOWED THAT THE PCF IS UNABLE, OR UNWILLING, TO WORK WITH OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES, EVEN THE SOCIALISTS WHO ARE RELATIVELY CLOSE TO THEIR VIEWS ON MANY ISSUES, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE EXISTENCE OF THE COMMON PROGRAM OF 1972. THIS EXPERIENCE SUGGESTS THAT THE PCF WOULD BE UNABLE TO GOVERN RESPONSIBLY WITHIN A COALITION, BUT WOULD INSTEAD USE THE MEANS AS ITS DISPOSAL TO ASSERT ITSELF AND TO ADVANCE ITW OWN INTERESTS.

7. CYNICAL DRIVE FOR POWER: PCF TACTICS ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE PARTY'S REAL AIM IS TO MAXIMIZE ITS OWN INDEPENDENT POWER -- WITHIN THE LEFT AND WITHIN THE GOF, AND THAT ITS LEADERSHIP IS PREPARED TO MANEUVER CYNICALLY TOWARD THESE OBJECTIVES. EVEN MANY PCF MEMBERS THEMSELVES SEE THE LAST-MINUTE ELECTORAL ACCORD WITH THE SOCIALISTS, AFTER MONTHS OF REFUSING COOPERATION UNTIL PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED, AS THE FINAL PROOF THAT POLITICAL TACTICS HAD REPLACED SUBSTANTIVE POLICIES AS THE PRIMARY CONCERN OF THE PARTY LEADERSHIP.

8. CONCLUSIONS: WHATEVER THE PCF MAY DO IN THE FUTURE TO NURTURE A "EUROCOMMUNIST" IMAGE, THE ABOVE FACTS INDICATE THAT THE PCF HAS SO FAR REMAINED A TIGHTLY CONTROLLED AND SECRETIVE ORGANIZATION WHOSE SYSTEM OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM DEMONSTRATES A CONTINUING FAITH IN AN AUTOCRATIC CENTRAL AUTHORITY, AND CONFIDENTIAL

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WHOSE FOREIGN POLICIES STILL CLOSELY PARALLEL THOSE OF THE USSR. THESE ARE POINTS WELL WORTH MAKING, AS ADDRESSEES DISCUSS THE AFTERMATH OF THE FRENCH ELECTIONS.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMUNISM, PARTY UNITY, COMMUNISTS, POLITICAL PARTIES, PARTY DISSENSION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PARIS11631
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780152-0393
Format: TEL
From: PARIS USEEC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780481/aaaacqjy.tel
Line Count: 269
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: bcfc34b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3040742
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY AND "EURO- COMMUNISM"
TAGS: PINT, FR, PCF
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bcfc34b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014